

Maine School of Science and Mathematics Parents Association

Minutes

Saturday, August 20, 2011, 1:30 PM, MSSM Auditorium

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Vice President Ayo Olugbemi at approximately 1:30 PM.

After parents had introduced themselves, VP Olugbemi reviewed the minutes of the March 2010 meeting. Acting upon a motion and second from the floor, the association approved the minutes by a show of hands.

VP Olugbemi explained the role of the organization as a link to MSSM, including a forum to funnel complaints that were not specific to an individual student. The association also has committees that help plan and execute school events, such as Prom Night. She also noted that there had been some controversy regarding the Parent Association's fundraising role vs. that of the MSSM Foundation, which had asked that the association not engage in fundraising. It had committed to providing the association with \$2,500 annually. Parents can donate to the MSSM Foundation.

The Treasurer, Lucy Benjamin, gave her report, stating that in May of 2011 the association had \$1,719.65, but had spent \$852.00 on Teacher Appreciation Day. \$465 had subsequently been deposited, for a current balance of \$1,332.45. It was anticipated that the MSSM Foundation contribution would add \$2,500 to this amount.

VP Olugbemi then announced the prior resignation of the MSSM PA President, due to a family relocation. She stated that a local parent had volunteered to stand for MSSM PA President, but asked if any parents wished to put forward other names. When no one did so, she introduced Brent Andersen of Presque Isle, stepfather of William Popov (2nd year sophomore). There was a motion and second from the floor to nominate Dr. Andersen as President. The body of the association then elected Dr. Andersen to the position of Association President by an affirmative show of hands.

Acting on the request of the treasurer to be replaced, Shannon Benedix volunteered to assume the office. Her name was placed in nomination and seconded by a motion from the floor, and she was elected by an affirmative show of hands. Another parent volunteered for whatever position might be needed, and the VP noted that several positions on committees would become available and that these would be made known in the near future.

VP Olugbemi then moved on to a discussion of three goals that the Parents Association would like the administration of MSSM to act upon in the coming year, as requested by the MSSM Executive Director. Three draft goals were discussed, revised, and formally approved by the body upon a motion and second from the floor. These were

### **Academic Support to Students**

Ideas suggested under this heading included using tutors and requiring that students get help when instructors deem that they need it. Using senior students as mentors to junior students was also suggested.

### **Strategies for Increasing Acceptance to Top Colleges**

As a part of this goal, parents suggested fostering more ongoing and substantial extracurricular activities that students could put on their college applications. Also creating special prizes for students, and examining whether MSSM's grading system is too harsh, thereby disadvantaging students in their applications. Other ideas included working to promote MSSM to top colleges, and networking through alumni.

### **Better Communication from the School with Parents**

This goal encompassed communication about how students are doing both academically and socially. Also promptly informing parents of system changes.

VP Olugbemi then turned the floor over to MSSM Executive Director Luke Shorty and Director of Resident Life/Dean of Students Matt Grillo for a Question and Answer session. Among other questions and concerns, parents expressed a desire to have MSSM adopt an online grade tracking program for parents so that they could monitor their student's academic progress assignment to assignment. ED Shorty stated that this was a priority for the school, but that administrative and staff training hurdles had yet to be overcome. He stated that a system would be adopted as soon as it was practicable. He also stated that resident advisors closely track their students' academic progress, and that parents can call and discuss this with them. Dean Grillo was asked about enforcing cleanliness in the dorms. He stated that he was a disciplinarian by inclination, and that sanitation would be enforced.

At 3:30 PM, observing that the meeting had to conclude, President Andersen asked the association body for an informal mandate to follow up on the issues raised with the ED and the staff, and, in his opinion, received an affirmative response from association members.

At 3:35 PM, acting affirmatively upon a motion and second from the floor, the association adjourned the meeting.



Brent S. Andersen, Ph.D.

MSSM PA President